Literary Cabinet.

Si non tantus fructus perciperetur ex his studiis, quantum percipi constat, sed ex his delectatio sola peteretur; tamen hæc animi remissio judicanda esset libero homine dignissima. CICERO.

VOL. I.] YALE COLLEGE, SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 1807. [No. 9.

"Sumite materiam vestris, qui scribitis, æquam Viribus; et versate diu, quid ferre recusent, quid valeant humeri."—HOR.

To the Editors of the Literary Cabinet.

GENTLEMEN,

WHEN your miscellany made its first appearance, I could not but regard it with a favorable eye. I had long wished that a literary publication should be conducted in a college to which I am attached from the principle of gratitude, and in the reputation of which, I consequently feel the strongest interest. You have however convinced me of a fact which the ardor of my wishes had excluded from my thoughts, that one of the greatest obstacles which can retard the progress of such a work, is want of firmness in condemning those pieces which are unworthy of admission. I would not have it suspected for a moment, gentlemen, that I mean to criminate your judgment either in matters of beauty and deformity, or of truth and error; but I cannot help believing that the delicacy of your feelings arising from the novelty of your situation, and the fear of giving offence, has prevailed over the decisions of your judgment. Suffer me however to remind you, in the words of one whose authority as a critic, will undoubtedly have weight with you, that to writers of mediocrity—"Non homines, non di, non concesserunt columnæ."

I have been led to make these observations from the perusal of the essays on *Rhyme*, which appeared in your last and in the preceding number. Error in judgment and weakness of argument, had they been accompanied with modesty, would have been pardonable; but when a young man who has not completed his collegiate education, presumes to oppose the decision of the whole learned world, and to utter his opinions in a manner so imperious, he must expect that they will be received with no other emotions than that of disgust. No other apology then is necessary for my troubling you with a few remarks upon this very extraordinary production.

"*It has been no uncommon thing among the moderns to find that those inventions and discoveries, which they had attributed to themselves, had originated among the ancients.*"

Though I disdain the employment of a mere verbal critic, yet I cannot but take notice of the expressions here used, because they appear to be the result of a confusion of ideas. The phrase "*Inventions originated*" is hardly correct. It seems to imply that an invention can be progressive. We may indeed *improve* upon in-

ventions when they are once known; but the invention itself is an instantaneous operation of the mind. But besides this, there is an obscurity in the whole sentence. Either the moderns must know, or they must not know, that the inventions, "*which they attribute to themselves*," rightly belong to the ancients. In the former case they are guilty of an unpardonable act of baseness, in not acknowledging the obligation; in the latter, they cannot, with propriety be said to owe those inventions to the ancients, because that would be a contradiction in terms. But it seems that "*it has been no uncommon thing for the moderns to find*" that they are indebted to the ancients. Now, the word "*find*" necessarily implies that they were before unacquainted with the fact; the moderns, therefore, have been till the present period, so grossly ignorant of all the vestiges of antiquity, as not to know how far the ancients were inferior or equal to them in acquirements! Glorious discovery! Well worthy of the enlightened nineteenth century.

But if this position be true, how can the succeeding sentence be reconciled with it? How could Locke borrow from Lucretius, when he knew nothing about that writer? Here it seems another position must be taken, and the author, with Protean facility, takes refuge in a different port. The modern has largely borrowed from the ancient, and is base enough to conceal the name of his benefactor. "*Credat Judæus Apella.*"

Whether Mr. Locke did or did not take his arguments to prove the existence of a vacuum from Lucretius, (for with reference to them I suppose the assertion was made) is a matter hardly worth the enquiry, since it cannot be absolutely decided. It is difficult to distinguish resemblances from thefts, and therefore there cannot be an infallible criterion by which to form a determination. Coincidences, not only in sentiment, but even in expression, have occurred among authors, who could not have had any knowledge of one another. And the reason of this is obvious. Whenever the productions of one are drawn from the same source with those of another, they must undoubtedly be similar. Locke examined the powers of his own mind, and from that vast repository drew forth ideas which it would be presumption to assert, that he obtained by turning over the pages of Lucretius. Poor Lord Stanhope too must be stripped of his laurels, that the head of Lucan may be decorated. And all for what? why because the Lyncean eyes of this gentleman's imagination can discern the substance of a philosophical proposition in the space of three or four lines of an epic poem! I wonder whether in the course of his "*inventions and discoveries*" he will not demonstrate that the moderns are indebted to Anacreon for their knowledge that the moon shines with a borrowed light, and that springs originate from vapor!

[To be continued.]

Human Prescience.

PHILO the Jew, who lived in the time of the apostles, says,—"Whatever man's soul is filled with the grace of prophecy, it is presently inebriated, and hence it is to the profane, that the inspired person appears *drunk*, and *out of his wits*; for of all ecstacies, the most remarkable, is the *di-*

vine epileptic fury, incident to the prophets." The Old Testament, (and I may even add the New,) contains many intimations of the same fact. Music, that lovely mover of the passions, whose magic power inflames, exalts, and ravishes the soul, was summoned to "rap the bard into future times." An instrument was brought and played on before the prophet Elisha could be elevated to a height of *enthusiasm* sufficient to predict the event of the war with the Moabites. "But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass when the minstrel played, the hand of the Lord came upon him." [2 *Kings*, iii. 15.]

The prophets seem to have felt an enthusiasm akin to that of the poet, and to have displayed the *wild and frantic transport of Pythia*. "The prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is *mad*," says Hosea, evidently alluding to the hurried, impetuous, rushing, phrenzy of inspiration.

The manner in which the Jewish prophets were affected, is a subject on which there is much curious learning: but I should appropriate to myself more than a proper share of this small "Cabinet," should I pursue it any further.

From a view of the facts which have been recited, I think we cannot but make this conclusion, strange as it is, that the *loss of our senses* in a trance or ecstasy, accompanied with all the external marks of *madness*, is considered by the greater part of mankind as proof of communications from above. How far we ought to credit appearances of so equivocal a character, or how far an individual should rely on any revelations he may suppose made to himself, during the tumult of a perturbed imagination, or the wild movements of passion, when reason is struck down lifeless; may be considered hereafter. I propose however, previously, to follow the footsteps of my friend "Clark," and endeavour to repair the waste he may be thought to have committed.

SPINOZA.

On the Profession of Law.

No. VIII.

ON the uncertainty of the laws much more is commonly said than the truth will support. All the great land-marks of property are fixed and immoveable; all the bulwarks of liberty and life have deep and strong foundations. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred of our ordinary business, there is no doubt as to the law. Nay more, it is not probable, that in the city of London, one mercantile transaction out of five thousand is the subject of the least hesitation, so that a lawyer would even advise to have a trial. Is this nothing? Is there no advantage in having nearly the whole business of life, especially all the common dealings between man and man, made so plain that to err is inexcusable negligence? In our country how many farms are peaceably sold, to one which is made the occasion of a law suit? How many estates are regularly distributed on the decease of the owner, under the acquiescence of all the parties interested, to one that is disputed? A just answer to these enquiries will place the subject on ground from which we have nothing to fear. Probably two thirds of all the law suits before our courts arise from a disagreement as to facts, and a considerable portion of the other third from a determination of one party not to do justice to the other till

obliged to do it, though both law and facts should be against him. Some uncertainty, however, does exist, but this is owing principally to the instability and imperfection of language. Another cause, is the different manner in which different men view the same subject. It is rather singular that charges should be preferred against lawyers, which are founded solely on a state of things inseparable from the nature of man. The bible is written in language, more easy to be understood, than any other book the world has ever seen. The principal subjects of a practical nature, are also easily comprehended by the mind of every man. Yet what volumes have been written to prove the sacred text to mean differently from what has commonly been the received meaning? And with what earnestness have different sects seperated from each other, and drawn with them whole kingdoms and succeeding generations, when the whole cause of the schism was a different construction of a few texts of scripture? Doubtless much of this sprung from the hearts of bad men; but charity induces us to impute something to the imperfection of language. From the same source it has happened that different constructions put upon treaties, those solemn instruments on subjects of great national importonce, have caused kingdoms to draw their swords upon each other. All the intercourse of society is liable to the same inconvenience. Not to mention ordinary conversation, the most important writings which men ever make, those containing testamentary dispositions of their estates, though drawn up with no common care, and solicitude, are often very lame and deficient, especially if not made with professional advice. Learned and able men, when called to decide upon wills, frequently say, "that they are totally unable even to conjecture the testator's meaning."

COKE.

On the Immortality of the Soul.

No. II.

A VIEW of the strong *desires*, which all possess, of living forever, will lead us to the same conclusion that man is immortal. The desire of life, and the dread of ceasing to exist, are emotions universally felt by savage and civilized nations. All shudder at the idea of annihilation. The minds starts back with horror, merely at the supposition of bidding an everlasting farewell to existence. Perhaps there is nothing, except eternal misery, which is so uncomfortable in reflection, as a return to non-existence. All the enjoyments which the present life can afford, dwindle into nothing when compared with immortality. Millions of ages, to be accompanied with the highest possible happiness, afford no pleasing anticipation, when it is known, that at their close, existence is forever terminated.—These ardent pantings for immortality, the Divine Being seems to have implanted in the breasts of all intelligent creatures. The virtuous and vicious are both possessed of these hopes and these fears. Did the abandoned only, desire immortality, there could perhaps, from this source be drawn no argument in favor of it. But the virtuous are equally desirous to live forever. Indeed their desires may be said to be stronger; for they expect in the eternal world a more desirable allotment.

Why, it may be asked, are these desires implanted in every breast? Perhaps it may be asserted with truth, that men are possessed of no desires which may not be gratified in some lawful way, when the object is not in itself, absolutely evil. If this be true, the fact, that all men, the virtuous as well as the vicious, have most ardent desires for immortality, will afford conclusive evidence that their desires are to be gratified. God does not delight to make his creatures miserable. He will not therefore, as we have reason to conclude, after having inspired them, and especially the virtuous, with strong desires of a never ceasing existence, disappoint such pleasing expectations. These desires will always continue: will they not therefore always promise a continuation of being?

A *general belief* of a future state among all nations, may be urged as a consideration of no small importance in favor of the soul's immortality. Most, if not all nations, have had some idea of a future existence. Their notions were more or less distinct, in proportion as the subject was made a matter of inquiry. Most of the ancient philosophers of the Greeks, and of the Gauls, and many of other ancient nations, believed that the soul is immortal. The Gauls, as we are informed by Cæsar, Strabo, and others, believed and taught that the soul does not die. The Indians or Brachmans, according to Strabo, give us this opinion on the present subject. "We are to think of this life," say they, "as of the state of a child before it be born, and of death, as a birth to that which is truly life, and happiness to wise men." Herodotus informs us that it was the opinion of the Egyptians, that the soul of man is immortal. It is recorded of the Thracians, that some of them thought that the souls of those who die, return again; others believed that though they do not return, yet they do not die. Funerals in Thrace were attended with great joy; because it was supposed that the souls of those buried would still exist. Heathen writers have taken notice of the judgment, and have consequently supposed that the soul survives the body. The same opinion respecting the soul, according to Grotius, was maintained among the inhabitants of the Canary Islands, and among the savages of this country. "I would have you to know," says Socrates, just before his death, "that I am now going into the company of good men." The Greenlanders believed the soul to be different from the body; that it survived it, and would live forever. Cicero informs us that when he read the arguments in favor of the soul's immortality, he was convinced. It must not be concealed however, that some of the wisest philosophers doubted at times, whether their conclusions, that the soul is immortal, were just. Some who had the name of philosophers, also disbelieved it.—Of the latter however, Dr. Clark has informed us that they were weak reasoners in other matters, and plainly low and contemptible philosophers, in comparison with those from whom they differed. The most respectable philosophers, it is believed have subscribed to the soul's immortality. It is not asserted that they have been alike confident at all times.—Their want of entire confidence, however, seems to have arisen

from those fears which usually attend strong desires, rather than from any fallacy discovered in their reasonings. But they have usually been consoled by their belief, and have recommended it to others as the foundation of *their* consolation. Accordingly whole nations have been believers in this doctrine. Different nations have drawn their arguments from different sources: but they have been alike conclusive to themselves. The great truth of the soul's immortality has been retained. The particulars in which they have differed, have not affected the conclusion. Many of them have been indeed absurd; but these absurdities do not weaken the force of the argument derived from a general belief of a future state.

This general persuasion of mankind, enlightened and unenlightened, that the soul is immortal, affords no small evidence that it is so. There are but two suppositions *respecting the cause of this persuasion, which are at all plausible;* both of which lead to confirm its justice. The one is, that they have derived their belief from tradition: and the other, that it has been the result of the researches of human reason. If the belief has been derived from tradition, it must have been handed down from the descendants of Noah after the flood, and of course it must have been derived from God. If the belief was acquired by the efforts of human reason, we may rationally conclude, that as most nations have adopted it, that it was well founded. Upon either supposition therefore, we are presented with no inconsiderable evidence that man is to exist forever. PLATO.

[To be continued.]

MESSRS. EDITORS,

AS it is the business of a *Logician*, not only to discover truth, but to correct the false reasonings of *Sophists*, it may perhaps be thought an employment not without use, to attend to syllogistic reasonings, where the conclusions, at once discover their falsity, although no infringement of rules is observed in the connection of the parts.

Through the medium of your paper, offering to your readers, Syllogisms like these, you may open a field for such invention as will unite the agreeable with the useful; and the answers returned may be the means of giving to those of your readers who are not at present acquainted with this part of education, some important ideas.

Impressed with these sentiments, Messrs. Editors, I have thought proper to send you a Syllogism, which, although it has no claim to originality, may still be worthy of attention; and which I shall be pleased to see corrected, according to those rules of logic, against which it infringes—

"It either rains or it does not rain.
"It does not rain;
"Therefore it rains."

Here is a manifest contradiction, as a fact is asserted to exist, and not to exist, at the same time. For more than *one*, I have nothing to say, but for myself, I should prefer such subjects as these to riddles and charades.

W. X. Y.

The Essayist.

No. VII.

Latet anguis in herba.—VIRGIL.

AS I have no great expectations from women, and respect them only as a part of the same species, I care not half so much

for offending a beauty, as a woman of sense; and since cheats are not to be tolerated in any society, I shall undoubtedly gain the good will of the latter by attempting to give them an equal chance to win the hearts of beholders, with those who wear borrowed charms instead of their own.

It is difficult to speak of these false fair ones, without saying something uncomplaisant: but as they have so utterly mistaken the art of *being pretty*, I would gladly rectify their misapprehensions, and recommend to them the consideration of the ill consequences of their present practice.

The admirers of handsome faces, have made two requisites necessary in order to the perfection of beauty; color and proportion. Though it may be true that there can be no beauty without them, yet it is equally true, that there can be no perfection of beauty, without something more. A skilful artist may give both these qualities to inactive matter; but the finest features, ranged in the most exact harmony, and ornamented with the most blooming complexion, without animation, are as uninteresting as they are lifeless. Fixed in the dead calm of insensibility, they will be examined without emotion; and void of all expression of amiableness, they will be viewed without love. A wanton aspect may indeed excite desire, but it is that of a savage, which only seeks the destruction of its object. These fictitious beauties are easily known, by their uniform want of vivacity and mental expression. Instead of countenances occasionally swollen with soft passion, or flushed with agreeable confusion, according as the ideas presented to them, affect the imagination, they always appear whether joyful or sad, with the same air of stupidity and indifference. And though their vanity induces them to invite the approach of lovers, yet they are obliged to keep them at a distance; for, a languishing sigh might dissolve a feature, and a presumptuous kiss might transfer the bloom of the mistress to her admirer. But when these self-formed beauties shall lay by their fictitious charms, instead of exciting ingenuous love or refined approbation, they will be viewed with a mixture of indignation and disdain. The lover will cease to admire, and the husband may be induced to solicit a mistress by the recollection of the beauties of his wife, which have vanished with their novelty.

It is therefore to be wished, that beauty were made entirely dependant on sentiment and manners; and worthy of admiration only as it indicates intellectual excellence and goodness of heart.—This kind of beauty, if it excite desire, corrects and refines it. It tacitly reproaches every irregular wish, produces virtuous love, and checks presumptuous confidence.

"Something than beauty dearer, should they look
"Or on the mind, or mind-illumined face;
"Truth, goodness, honor, harmony, and love,
"The richest bounty of indulgent heaven." R.

NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

To P. P. in his own language. Eht sgniyarb fo a "ssa-kcaJ" era elbissimdani.

ERRATA.

THE reader is requested to omit the figures 1st, and 2d, in the last piece of CLARK, as they were introduced by mistake.

The Bower.

.....Sometimes
We bid bright Fiction to resemble Truth,
And sometimes speak what Truth herself approves.

HES. THEOG.

DAMON'S ANSWER
TO CELIA'S COMPLAINT.

Possess'd of love's enchanting zone,
And plac'd on beauty's radiant throne,
Can you for *Pity* sue?
As well might scepter'd monarchs ask
Compassion of the crowds that bask
Beneath their sovereign view.

Successive objects strike the mind,
And with appropriate forms combin'd
The according passions move;
Admiring joy, complacence, hope,
Sweet sympathy's alluring group
Await the steps of love.

Such is thy train, angelic maid;
Why then invoke kind Pity's aid,
And take her plaintive strain?
Let pity still the wretched lead,
To you for others, let her plead,
Nor let her plead in vain.

Bless'd *Valentine!* with tokens white
We'll mark the day that bro't to light
The sweet effusive lay:
In these unrivall'd lines I trace
The hand that paints with equal grace
The pensive and the gay.

The form where innocence and truth,
The sense of years the charms of youth,
Enchantingly abide,
The gift I meet with raptur'd breast,
Beyond the price of crowns confess'd,
And all the world beside.

Suspense no more with torturing power,
Nor dark despair with gloomy reign
Shall cloud the happy year,
Till virtue claim its last reward
Be't mine thy future peace to guard,
And wipe the falling tear.

Should fortune each fair hope beguile
Or on us fav'ring should she smile,
Our mutual wish the same,
In grief to soothe the sinking heart,
In joy each transport fond impart,
And catch the etherial flame.

Oh thou! by whose supreme controul,
A sparrow falls or systems roll,
Do thou my prayer approve;
On her thy richest gifts bestow,
May joy her path with roses strew,
And crown celestial love.

I'D RATHER BE EXCUSED.

Returning from the Fair one eve,
Across yon verdant plain,
Young Harry said he'd see me home,
A tight and comely swain.
He begg'd I would a fairing take,
And would not be refused;
Then ask'd a kiss; I blushed and cried
"I'd rather be excus'd."
"You're coy, said he, my pretty maid,
I mean no harm I swear;
Long time I have in secret sigh'd
For you my charming fair:
But if my tenderness offend,
And if my love's refused,
I'll leave you—"what alone!" cried I,
"I'd rather be excused."
He pressed my hand, and on we walked;
He warmly urg'd his suit,
But still to all he said, I was
Most obstinately mute.
At length got home, he angry cried,
"My fondness is abused,"
"So die a maid;" said I,
"I'd rather be excused." DELIA.

THE STRIKING LIKENESS.
AN EPIGRAM.

Come hither, sir John, my picture is here,
What think you, my love, don't it *strike you?*
I can't say it does just at present, my dear,
But think it soon will, it's so like you.

Solution of the Charade, page 64.

That war is destructive, by none is denied;
Our grandmother's hoops, our young misses deride;
To the Indian the war-hoop is music most sweet
And inspires him with courage all danger to meet.

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